THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

BY

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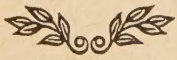

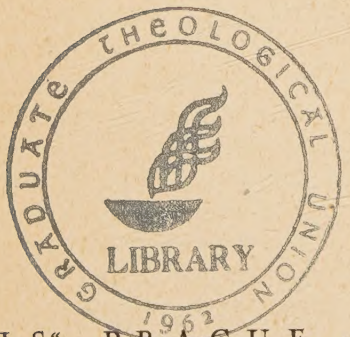

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I.

In the history of the Czech people religious passion has been the creative energy at the heart of their nationalism. The religious fervour of the past has been the chief impulse governing political events and the great controlling force in the evolution of State and people. It was the conflit for religious rights and freedom that aroused, influenced and determined the nation in its remarkable mediaeval democracy; and it was the union of this religious spirit with the distinctive Czech nationalism that was so terribly humiliated and destroyed after the battle of Bílá Hora, the battle of the White Mountain, 1620.

Those who regard Czech history, and especially its great epochs of fame and humiliation, from the point of view mainly of religious interests, assigning but a slight importance to racial national impulses, must needs have in their minds the thought particularly of nationalism of the modern scientific type, which arose and developed with the people's ripening culture at the end of the nineteenth century; but there has been undoubtedly a strong, elemental, racial idea of nationalism as long as the people, as a people, has

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existed. And we must regard this distinctive national feeling as having been an inseparable part of Czech life and character, developed in necessary causal union with the deep-rooted religious passion of the people, so that neither can afterwards be eliminated from the other; and in any adequate presentation of Czech history there cannot but be the careful tracing of their mutual relations and influences.

To understand the present we must realise the past. There have been two great and important epochs in the Czech religious past, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation periods, i. e., the periods prior and subsequent to the battle of the White Mountain, 1620. And it is in the former period only, extending from the latter part of the 14th to the beginning of the 17th century, that we come into contact with the vital, vigorous and progressive elements in the nation's past.

It would be well for the English student of Czech history to compare its activities, religious and political, during that time with the contemporaneous period of English history. It is the period of the English Wycliffe, of the Plantagenet Edward III, of the field of Crecy, 1346, where we find the brave, erratic, blind King John of Bohemia numbered among the slain knights of France and her allies, leaving to all the future Princes of Wales the legacy of his knightly plume and motto. John's son, Charles, was wounded in the battle, but survived to succeed his father as Charles IV, one of the most famous of Bohemian kings, under whose rule and favouring influence the University of Prague was established, second only in fame to that of Paris, and law and order, peace and prosperity reigned in the land. Though German Emperor as well

as King of Bohemia, he caused the Czech language to be honoured equally with German and to be used in the law courts and schools throughout the kingdom. Charles IV died in 1378, the year following the death of Edward III, and was succeeded by his son Venceslas IV, whose sister Anne became Queen of England as the wife of Richard II, and whose brother Sigismund, his successor to the Bohemian throne, proved himself the inveterate enemy of religious freedom and the criminal abettor of the murder of Hus. This first reformation period of Czech history reaches down through the English Lancastrian and Yorkish dynasties, through the great expansive times of the Tudor monarchs to the reign of the first Stuart king, James I, and to the battle of the White Mountain, near Prague, 1620.

The agitation against the Church of Rome was at first nothing more than a natural disaffection against the prevailing immorality of its clergy; a purely ethical protest against a Church that could continue to tolerate and even condone such practices among its priests. The movement in Bohemia in favour of Church reform was originally free from all hostility to the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church. The earliest leaders were among the truest and most obedient sons of the Church. But in Bohemia, as in other European States, the natural sentiment of the people for purity and righteousness led up inevitably to an urgent plea for fuller reforms in religion in opposition to the arbitrary, dogmatic and worldly misrule of the Church; for a purer priesthood, an open Bible in the language of the people, and freedom for independent, personal religious convictions.

Think of the strange situation in this great Catholic

Church at the beginning of the 15th century with its two conflicting headships, the Roman pope, Gregory XII and the Avignon pope, Benedict XIII ! And this confusion becoming worse confounded when the cardinals of both parties in their united council, 1409, deposed both these headships and chose a third, Alexander V, as pope; so that for a time we have the spectacle of three popes, each claiming to be the viceregent of Christ on earth, and each two of whom denying, denouncing, and defying the other's claim! Yet they all agree in one thing, that heresy of any kind, any independent, reform movement, however beneficial, pure and holy, must be killed, as the deadly foe of their own absolute authority.

The timid beginnings of the Reformation in Bohemia may be traced already in the 13th century. At that time the teaching of the Waldensian sect began to spread through Central Europe. And, as it entered Bohemia from the south, some traces of its influence may be observed in the religious views of the later Táborites, the most radical of the Hussite party; on the other hand, the Táborite doctrine influenced later in a reflex way the literature and teachings of the Waldensians, so that from 1431 the Táborite creed is markedly evident in several Waldensian writings. Members of this Waldensian sect living abroad paid sympathetic attention to the Hussite movement, and from Dauphiné, sent liberal money contributions to Bohemia. In the 15th century attemps were made to unite in one body of belief the Hussite and Waldensian doctrines, and the Táborite party supported this movement; but in 1434, the Táborites were defeated and practically exterminated by the Bohemian aristocratic parties at the fatal battle of Lipany, the separate

Waldensian contact with Protestantism prospered, where Tábor had been unable to succeed.

The Waldensian doctrine probably influenced even Peter Chelčický, the spiritual founder of the Unitas Fratrum or Unity of Bohemian Brethren, although he himself does not mention anything about the Waldensian teaching in his writings. The first bishop of the Unity was consecrated by the Waldensian bishop Stephen; so it is evident that the Bohemian Brethren were acquainted with and sympathetically regarded the Waldensian Church at the time of the foundation of the Unity.

The immediate precursors of Hus and Hussitism in Bohemia were *Konrad Waldhauser, Jan Milič of Kroměříž* (Kremsier) and *Matthew of Genoa.* Their ideas, especially those of *Jan Milič,* must be considered as constituting the substantial basis of the great Hussite upheaval. All these three men worked for reforms in the Church, each in his own way; but neither of the first two mentioned attempted in the least to be a dogmatic reformer of doctrine.

Konrad Waldhauser, 1326-1369, was a sober-minded practical man, who paid more attention to the prosaic necessities of temporal life than to spiritual meditations, yet strove earnestly to improve the corrupt morals of the people and clergy.

Jan Milič was an idealistic mystic, a man of great purity of heart and life, who practised what he preached. Distributing his property, he lived a simple, saintly life. Himself pure and desiring only purity in others, he asked Pope Urban VI to put a stop to the careless living, misdemeanours and vices of the bishops, priests, mendicant friars and nuns; and thus he was Hus's genetic predecessor, full of zeal for

popular morality, but in the realm of dogmatic religion strictly orthodox.

Matthew of Genoa, 1350-1394, the pupil of *Milič,* was a theologian whose theology was the basis for future reformative impulses. The Utraquist clergy, especially in the Hussite period, referred to him as one of their chief authorities. He was intensely devoted to the study of the Bible, and emphasized the importance of this study as no one had ever done before. To him the Bible represented the sole source of belief, and he places its teaching in strong contrast to the lifeless formalities of the contemporary Church. It may be said that he expressed in literary form what *Milič* had tried to do practically.

And so the sequence of reformation ideas in Bohemia continues and is linked to Hussite doctrine, longings and life. It is asserted that Hus did not know the writings of *Matthew of Genoa,* though he knew of his public work; but at least these new thoughts had been born amongst men, they existed in the minds of the people, and became a heritage for the future, and, whether directly or indirectly traceable to this source, some certainly of Matthew's ideas find their way into Hus's teachings.

As in the case of preceding appeals, so Hussitism in its origin was preeminently a moral movement, not a new dogmatic, theological appeal; but these theological elements introduced themeselves as natural, inevitable, urgent adjuncts of the moral reforming movement. The moral precedes the intellectual appeal, fittingly preparing the way for it; the sound ethical instinct of the people cannot but condemn the flagrant immorality of those "who minister in holy things"; and this condemnation cannot but seek to justify it-

self in doctrine. In Bohemia, then, rational religious criticism gradually evolved long before Wycliffe's writings became known and read; so that, when his theological works were introduced into Bohemia, they found the people thoroughly prepared to compare, deliberate upon and accept what they thought to be preferable for themselves.

Wycliffe's teachings may be conveniently summed up under eight heads.

(1) Denial of Papal supremacy and declaration of national and independent individual rights.
(2) Freedom of thought in religious matters.
(3) Giving of Bible and religious teaching generally in the vernacular of the people.
(4) Lay teachers as well as clerical.
(5) Demand for reform of the corruption of the clergy.
(6) Praise of poverty especially in opposition to the wealth of the Church and Church dignitaries.
(7) Insistence on inward conviction and purity as the essentials of religion in opposition to ecclesiastical ritualism, formalism and dogma.
(8) Repudiation of the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Much of this was necessarily at the root of all Protestant Reformation movements, but Czech Hussitism is less Wyclifist in its origin than it is popularly supposed to be. Hus undoubtedly drank deeply of Wycliffe's doctrine, but Hussitism was not Wyclifism in substance or in direct descent. Hussitism was Hus *plus* a free, popular Czech reforming religious movement. And certainly Wycliffe's writings did not influence the Czech people directly, for they were written in Latin and English, and were largely doctrinal,

while Hussitism was substantially a moral revolution. There never existed a movement in the world which has not been touched by some foreign influence. The teachings of Wycliffe were seed sown in no strange soil. They found in Bohemia a congenial spiritual home in contact with an appreciative and sympathetic combination of thought and culture.

Hus grew up in a native atmosphere of mental and moral enquiry, and this developing rational spirit of his time and people found in him a specially responsive soul. Wycliffe's doctrine thus found him a ready pupil; and that he was considerably influenced by it, is a fact gratefully acknowledged by himself and by Czech historians. It was fortunate that Hus could sit at the feet of such a master as Wycliffe. He was the glad disciple of a great teacher, but he was something more than a mere disciple; his native outlook, his yea or nay freely expressed were of his own people and his own personality. His work and teachings must be regarded essentially as the embodiment of the previously unexpressed ideas of rational criticism prevalent in the Czech nation, which in its formative process towards final expression absorbed much of Wycliffe's doctrine, yet throughout maintained the particular genius of its native origins and home and culminated in the distinctive, national and religious, idealistic, reformation movement known in history as Czech Hussitism.

This European reformation movement, as it appeared and developed in Bohemia, is remarkable for its distinctive sources and features due not only to the peculiar personality of its Czech representatives, but also to the peculiar mentality of the people.

One outstanding, distinctive feature of this Czech

religious upheaval is well worthy of notice. While apparently elsewhere it represented something gloomy that gave people an uneasy feeling of fear and sadness, the Czech reformation on the contrary was something placid, reassuring, almost joyful, that inspired love for mankind and a bright hope and faith in a better hereafter; yet nevertheless with a stern, spiritual vigour to oppose evil and to suffer in the days of disaster and humiliation.

Hus's ways though decisive were gentle and full of love. He proclaimed the first essential of goodness to be truth. "Look for the truth," he said, "hear the truth, love the truth, defend the truth till death". And thus he pointed out the way which he himself was ready to tread, even unto death. His morality was a philosophy, but, what was much more important, his philosophy was a living obedience to the truth. His religious views were clear, accessible and intelligible for simple minds. There were no mysteries in them nor threatening terrors; and, what was a real intellectual advance for the times, there were no subtle evasions of the direct issue of truth, and no persecution of those who might differ from his conclusions. Hus thus stands forth as the great pioneer on the road from mediaevalism to modernism.

Although the primary impulse for religious reform was not very different in Bohemia from that in other European states, its acceptance and assimilation, its spontaneous and widespread active protest, differed there essentially from elsewhere. Bohemia is noteworthy as the one European country where this ethical criticism of the Church of Rome assumed at the end of the 14th century a definite attitude of open rebellion to the Church. It is in this early militant expression

of the doctrine of religious liberty on the basis of a strongly developed popular intellectualism that we discover the unique character of the Czech reformation upheaval of the 14th and 15th centuries. While elsewhere in Europe it remained limited to mere sects in certain districts, in Bohemia the people, and all the people, helped to create, mould and assimilate reformation ideas. As a nation, solitary, isolated in the heart of Europe and surrounded by vindictive foes, the Czech people defended and fought for and suffered for these ideas; and even when they failed they could claim that for two centuries they had in the cause of religious liberty defied the terrible power of the Roman Church.

Hussitism was thus from the beginning a large democratic movement.

It is remarkable that in Bohemia the people were the driving force and that they carried with them the nobility in their acceptance of Hussitism. The gathering of people at Tábor after the martyrdom of Hus constituted in a marvellous way a combined religious and political protest against the prevailing, despotic, feudal conditions of life. Even before the arrival of Žižka in their midst they were a formidable military organisation, with a deep compelling fervour of religious enthusiasm, under the leadership of their own clergy. And with the arrival of Žižka they became still more thoroughly organized on a military basis; at the same time they developed into a distinctly socialistic community where the rich shared their wealth with the poor. Tábor became the stronghold and centre of all those who most energetically opposed the government of King Sigismund. Yeomen, peasants and even nobles from all parts of Bohemia flocked to the new

town in which no differences of rank were recognized, and, following the example of the primitive Christians, all were brothers and sisters to each other. All the advanced opponents of Rome among the clergy also assembled at Tábor, where, besides establishing Communion in both kinds, they organized religious services which in many ways differed from the customs of the Church of Rome. All vestments were prohibited, the priests officiating in ordinary clothes. The use of Latin in Church services was also abolished and was replaced by the Bohemian language.

Žižka, the great national warrior-hero, 1419-1424, so resented the outrage perpetrated by the Roman Church in the martyrdom of Hus that he felt it impossible to make any truce with such foes. Only the sword, he said, could be the arbiter of peace: and in this spirit he so well equipped, drilled and disciplined his Táborites, so infused into them the fear of God and fearlessness of man that he and his successor, Prokop the Great, through twelve years of war successfully defied and defeated the combined armies of Europe in their Holy Roman Crusades against this one little bulwark of Reformation in the heart of the continent.

It was Žižka's genius that made Bohemian Hussitism the one great, fearless, conquering foe of papal Rome during the first half of the 15th century. If he did not invent, he at least brought into use with astounding skill and success the waggon-forts or lagers which were iron-plated and capable of being linked together with strong chains and admirably suited for warfare in a country like Bohemia where there are wide stretches of cornlands with no intersecting hedges, ditches or lanes, such as are marked

features of the landscape in the English countryside. These mobile armoured cars, with their specially trained marksmen musketeers mounted beside the drivers, became the terror of their enemies on the field of battle, assisted as they were by artillery, which, however crude, was far more effectively handled by Žižka's Táborites than in any of the other armies of the time. These waggons were the homes of the soldiers and the women and children, and in the case of temporary defeat constituted strong, concentrated camps of defence.

The story of these brave Hussite Bohemians during this period in their invincible fight for liberty against the terrific onslaught of the armies of Europe, united under the papal banner and numbering in their ranks some of the bravest knights of the age, deserves far wider recognition from English people who are usually not unappreciative of such stories of heroism wherever found. It is surely one of the great epic stories of European history.

One naturally wonders what would have become of Hussitism with all its remarkable Táborite enthusiasm without Žižka's leadership. As a military organisation it would seem to have been doomed to succumb in the face of the vastly superior force of its enemies. Probably Hus and Hussitism would have appeared on the page of history only as the source and stream of a distinctive national, spiritual struggle. Although after the death of Žižka in 1424, Prokop the Great continued his career of military victories in the overwhelming defeat of the German princes at Ústí in the north of Bohemia and then in the almost miraculous defeat of the massed armies of Europe on their much vaunted

religious crusade in the west of the kingdom,*) the seeds of discord were already sown in the Bohemian nation. This discord fatally separated the extreme democratic Táborite section and the Utraquist nobles, and culminated in the tragic battle between the two parties at Lipany, 1434, when the Táborite democratic army was practically annihilated.

Thus no doubt the Reformation process evolved far more happily in other lands because it did not there resolve itself into a democratic struggle for social and political as well as religious freedom resulting in the alienation of the aristocratic supporters and a disastrous cleavage in its early unity.

This militant Hussitism which culminated in the pitiful slaughter of Lipany, 1434, may be called the first phase of the Czech Reformation.

Peter Chelčický, the spiritual founder of the "Jednota Českých Bratří" (The Unity of the Bohemian Brethren), grew up in the home of Hussitism during the first half of the 15th century. The teachings of the Bohemian Brethren are in the main only humanized Hussitism. Hus preached love and so did Chelčický. But it must not be forgotten that this primary Hussite idea lost much of its savour, as might any other idea, during the incessant wars of that period. Chelčický preached against any form of violence; he rejected war and was an apostle of peace, and thus his thoughts and views and teaching meant the reform and regener-

*) In connection with the battle of Tachov fought on the 4th of August 1427, it is interesting to note that the inhabitants of the district even at the present day remind visitors of this great Czech victory by pointing out the marks made, according to them, by the defeated Germans kneeling down before the victorious Hussites.

ation of militant Hussitism. Chelčický himself was in no way associated with Luther or Lutheranism, for he died in 1460, 23 years before Luther was born.

While Chelčický's idea of non-militant Christianity was implanting itself more deeply into the minds of the people and its adherents were beginning to form themselves into a distinctive religious sect, the Protestant movement, and particularly Lutheranism, was fruitfully germinating abroad and making its influence felt amongst the Czech people in a vigorous resistance to Roman Catholic oppression. In 1462 when the "Compactata" were abolished, by which in 1436 the relations between the Hussite religious party and the Catholic Church had been fixed, and the nation was being forced more and more to accept Roman Catholicism, the people at first offered only passive resistance which was not founded on very deep religious conviction; but as soon as the reports of Luther's teachings spread in the country, Hussitism revived and mingled more and more with Lutheran thoughts and practice. The Czech nation felt that in future it would not have to stand alone but might expect some assistance in its endeavours from abroad, so the attitude of passive resistance changed into a more determined opposition. Lutheranism thus made its appeal to the Czech people not on its doctrinal side, but as a possible ally in the fight against a common foe. The fact that Lutheranism made such rapid progress in Germany and that in the conflict there between the Protestants and the Catholic Emperor, Charles V, the Protestant nobility succeeded at least partly in safeguarding their rights, stimulated the revival of Czech Hussitism so that when again the religious situation demanded re-adjustment in Bohemia the Lutherans as

such became a legitimately recognized body, and Czech Hussitism under the mantle of Lutheranism took advantage of the settlement to ensure itself legal protection. Thus King Ferdinand I, 1526-1564, whose election marks the beginning of the Habsburg rule over Bohemia, although he did not like the Czech heretics, was obliged by the general European situation to be satisfied with this solution of the religious question in his kingdom.

At this time Roman Catholicism was apparently fast losing its hold upon the nation for the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church probably did not number one third of the total population; the Protestant section of the people was made up of the old Utraquist party, the Lutherans and the Bohemian Brethren. However, after the temporary defeat of Protestantism in Germany by the Emperor, Charles V, his brother Ferdinand, king of Bohemia, received considerable military aid from him, and obtained amongst other things a large mixed body of Spanish and Walloon soldiers, which made him feel strong enough to impose further restrictions on Protestant liberty, with the result that the Unity of the Bohemian Brethren, the most democratic of the Protestant party, was in 1547 declared an illegal association and their bishop Augusta was most horribly tortured and then imprisoned. A further important result was the formal establishment under royal decree of the Jesuit Order throughout the country.

Periods of more severe religious oppression alternated with those of greater liberty till the insurrection in 1618, at the beginning of which King Matthew's vice-regents were thrown out of the windows of the royal castle in Prague. The Czech nobility then

thought themselves strong enough to offer the same obstinate opposition as the Protestants in Germany. But there was no longer the same popular enthusiasm to aid them. Serfdom had largely been re-established through the country and the nobles were fearful of the consequences to themselves of an army recruited from the people. They therefore were compelled to rely on the help of foreign mercenary troops. The Czech hope, too, of Protestant help from Germany was not realized; while following the death of Matthew, the election of the weak and irresolute Frederick, the Elector Palatine, to the Bohemian crown in opposition to Ferdinand, the newly elected German Emperor, was the culminating adverse element in the brief struggle leading unevitably to the crushing defeat of Protestant Bohemia in the battle of Bílá Hora, the battle of the White Mountain, 1620. And from that moment begins the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation period in Bohemia.

Bílá Hora is the great tragedy of the story of Bohemia. It meant not only the end of Czech independence, but also one of the greatest national religious humiliations in the annals of history. There were two victors, the forces of which were united, the Habsburgs and the Roman Catholic Church; and, of the two, the latter was the mightier, more vindictive and cruel.

The resolution of the Habsburgs' court of justice, in consequence of which twenty-seven Czech noblemen were sentenced to capital punishment, some of them even to torture before being executed, was carried out because the Roman Catholic Church wished it, Cardinal Dietrichstein and the priests, P. Dominicus and Sancta Maria, persistently inciting the victorious emperor, Ferdinad II, not to be frightened of

these executions, as they were necessary for the conversion of the people. The twenty-seven nobles who perished at Prague were able at least to make a last protest for their religion. They would not let themselves be persuaded by the Jesuits to avow themselves Catholics, but died in their forefathers' faith with prayers on their lips for a better future for their native land. Ferdinand II. was only a puppet in the hands of the Catholic priests, who desired now to exact the full measure of vengeance on this accursed heretic nation, and with the military adventurers in the army and the favourites of the king set out to seize the estates of the executed and banished nobles. Confiscations soon followed the executions. Twothirds of the Czech landowners were completely robbed of their property. "The place of the ancient Bohemian nobles who were driven often penniless into exile was taken by a very motley company, consisting mainly of Imperial courtiers and generals. We find among these men of various nations, Germans, Spaniards, Walloons, Italians, and, after the fall of Waldstein (or Wallenstein), Scotchmen and Irishmen. All, however, shared a common devotion to the Church of Rome, and a common hatred of the Bohemian nation." "A yet greater change took place in the Bohemian towns. The numerous Protestants, mostly of Bohemian nationality, who had inhabited these towns and who had refused to apostatize, were driven into exile, and they were replaced by German immigrants belonging to the Church of Rome."

There is no similar example to be found in history of such systematic plunder of his people at the hands of a vengeful victorious king. Even the wholesale confiscation of Saxon estates for his barons by Norman

William affords no adequate parallel to this.

"But while the nobles and citizens, who wished to preserve their religious convictions, were at least allowed to leave their country, though often in a state of complete destitution, no such option was granted to the peasants, whom serfdom attached to the soil for the cultivation of which they were required. They were to remain as Romanists. Serfdom now appeared in its full horror. The new landowners punished with fiendish cruelty all who did not regularly attend at mass or avoided receiving communion according to the Roman rites."

The Catholic priests entered with festal pomp the churches taken from the heretics, desecrated the graves of the heretic preachers and noblemen, and cast their bones anywhere as refuse.

Catholic fanatics, Jesuits and missionaries were called into the land and sent among the people to compel them to resign their faith. Those who opposed were driven forcibly into the Catholic churches and those who persisted in their objection banished or executed. Thus the best of the people perished or were driven from their homes into permanent exile.

The one controlling idea of the government through their officers and the Roman Church was to destroy the national spirit. They had once martyred Hus; they now proceed for two hundred years to martyr his spirit in the nation.

"We have fought for freedom!" says Denis, the well-known French historian of Bohemia, "this was the last cry of old Bohemia who was dying on the cross." — "It was His cry on Golgotha, in whose name His unworthy pupils spread death and terror around them, it was the cry which history repeats from century to

century: 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!'"

Whatever was possible to be done to kill even the memory of the past was done. From the year 1620 till 1781 without cessation old Bohemian books and records were thrown into the flames, and burned often with festivities on scaffolds. One alone of those Catholic fanatics, the Jesuit Koniáš, is said to have burned 60,000 Bohemian books.

For a time, in spite of laws and punishments, officials and priests, the old spirit lingered on. Politically all resistance was absolutely crushed, but secret religious circles were formed. Divine services were held and the Czech Bible was read in carefully concealed hiding-places. Hundreds of such places in the Czechoslovak Republic are hidden in deep forests and are still known by the name of "The valley of prayers". It must be confessed, however, that finally the mass of the people remaining in the country submitted to the new order of things. A certain apathy laid hold of the people's hearts. The continuous persecution of their inmost feelings, the constant forcing them into things they did not wish and in which they did not believe at last exhausted their hopes and deadened their aspirations. Time after time they were disappointed in their expectation of aid from the Protestants in the neighbouring States. Foreign sovereigns offered them help to support their endeavours for religious liberty; but those rulers were eager merely for their own aims of conquest with the assistance of the Czech people, so that such interferences from abroad brought no good to them. Hostile invasions were enthusiastically welcomed, but only led to the people's further disappointment and despair. And it was no

doubt this treachery of seeming friends that succeeded finally in utterly crushing the spirit of the people.

"There are few darker pages in the world's history than those in which the state of Bohemia after the Thirty Years' War is recorded. Almost every part of the country had been devastated. The population of Bohemia, which at the beginning of this war had exceeded 3,000,000, had dwindled to 800,000 at the end of the war. The towns had lost the greater part of their population. Among the exiled Protestants had been almost all the prominent merchants and tradesmen, who now sought refuge in distant countries. Prague, recently the capital of a vast empire, after the treaty of Westphalia acquired the aspect of a provincial town, and this continued throughout the eighteenth century. The new nobility of Bohemia rarely visited Prague, and resided mainly in Vienna in the vicinity of the court. The new nobles, mostly men of inferior and often mean birth, who owed their fortune to the Thirty Years' War, were greatly attracted by the splendour of that court, which rivalled even the court of Madrid. New titles were widely distributed among these men. The ancient nobility of Bohemia had been somewhat averse to the bearing of titles of duke, count, or baron, considering them as German dignities, and they had usually been merely described as "pan" (lord). The generals and courtiers who now replaced them naturally had no such repugnance."

"The fate of the Bohemian peasantry in the period subsequent to the peace of Westphalia was an unspeakably miserable one. Frequent insurrections, which were repressed with merciless cruelty, were the consequence. The agents whom the new Bohemian nobles, almost always absenters, entrusted with the control of their

peasants, were probably more cruel than the overseers of the Russian *muzhiki* or the slave-drivers of the southern States of America. In Russia both master and man were generally Slavs and members of the Orthodox Church, while the southern slave-driver often treated his slaves with contemptuous good-nature. But the agent of the German and Romanist nobles of Bohemia both hated and despised the peasants, who were Slavs, and often still secretly heretics."

It needs a special mental effort for the student of history to remind himself that this is the record of a people in Central Europe in the 17th, 18th and early part of the 19th century; of a people, too, previously famous for its intelligent religious zeal and advanced democratic liberties in the 15th century.

The year 1781 marks the turning-point of the Counter-Reformation period. It was the so-called period of "enlightened despotism" encouraged and emphasized by the wave of democratic enthusiasm which spread over Europe from the storm-centre of revolutionary France.

During her reign Maria Theresa had seriously encroached upon Bohemian independence and lessened the influence of the Bohemian language by abolishing the separate higher law-courts throughout the country and establishing a tribunal at Vienna for the whole of Austria.

Joseph's chief principles of government were centralisation of State control and Germanization of the people, which working together aimed at the complete extermination of Czech national independence. The German language was to be the only medium of education, commerce and of all state official matters under the watchful guardianship of the central bureau-

cratic Vienna government.

Three important reforms, however, stand to the credit of this monarch of "enlightened despotism". First, most curiously in opposition to his other language edicts, he permitted the publication at Prague in Czech of a national newpaper, while professorships of the Czech language were established at the University of Vienna and somewhat later at Prague. Thus, as the independence of a nation largely depends on the survival and living development of its language, Joseph II may be said to have been the parent, much against his own wishes, of the Bohemian literary renaissance of the following century. Secondly, at the very beginning of his reign, in 1781, he swept away the curse of serfdom, which still, in the latter part of the 18th century, was the lot of the Bohemian peasant. And thirdly, in the same year, he issued his famous Edict of Toleration, the "Toleranz Patent", which granted religious freedom with some reservations, to non-Catholic creeds, that is to say, to Lutheranism and Calvinism, i. e. the Helvetian and Augsburg Confessions.

All other confessions and sects, e. g. the Bohemian Brethren, were excluded. Non-Catholics were permitted, only private Divine Services, but they were allowed to buy houses and landed property, were granted all the rights of citizenship, and could be graduates of universities and accepted as officials into the State service. Every papal order before it was proclaimed had to be placed for sanction before the State officials, and it was possible to appeal from the sentence of the Church's judicial courts to the State courts of justice.

The Edict of Toleration marked a great improvement in the religious and political life of the Bohemian

nation. The violence of religious oppression weakened, not merely officially but also personally and voluntarily, in the ranks of the Catholic priesthood. The sons of the people themselves became the priests of the people, men who felt with the people, because they were of their own flesh and blood, and thus Catholicism began to implant itself deeper into the people's hearts.

During the period following the general European pacification of 1815 there was a recrudescence in Austria, Hungary excepted, of oppressive Habsburg absolutism. The liberty of the subject became entirely submerged in an arbitrary system of police espionage. "A double system of censure, one political, the other ecclesiastical, rendered it impossible to express in print any opinions that were not in strict accordance with the views of the government of Vienna."

Yet this was the very period of Bohemian literary revival, due to a small group of men, of whom Jungmann, Dobrovský, Palacký, Kollár and Šafařík were most prominent. To some extent these young enthusiasts were protected from police persecution by receiving appointments as librarians or tutors in the families of patriotic noblemen.

And the development of the national language was still further considerably encouraged by the foundation, in 1818, of the Society of the Bohemian Museum, which was successful in collecting, preserving and printing many most valuable historical MSS. Many ancient songs were thus rediscovered and circulated, which largely contributed to the revival of national patriotism. It is worty of notice that this era of Bohemian literary revival was far from exciting Germanic race hatred.

About 1840 we perceive distinct signs of democratic political activity in the country. The meetings of the Bohemian Diet or Estates had hitherto been but dull affairs, at which everything was servilely voted according to the official programme, but in 1847 the May Meetings at the Hradčany betokened the infusion of a new nationalist life determined on some measure at least of Home Rule, such as the control of roads and the introduction of the Czech language into the schools.

One of the great awakening liberal forces of that time was Charles Havlíček's journal, the "Pražské Noviny," with its ingenious ironical attacks on the Austrian Government and the Roman Catholic Church. As this was impossible in any direct manner on account of the censorship, Havlíček did it in the form of reports on the condition of Ireland, Russia and so on, leaving his readers to make the necessary comparison with the condition of Bohemia. His epigrams are unique.

After the so-called revolutionary outbreak of 1848 at Prague, and the consequent renewal of reactionary despotism in the Habsburg empire, Havlíček started at Prague a new paper, the "Národní Noviny," which was at frequent intervals confiscated and suppressed, until, despairing of any success in this direction, he moved to Kutná Hora, where he continued the unequal struggle in the publication of the "Slovan." Finally, under the autocratic Minister, Baron Bach, he suffered arrest, deportation, broken health and death.

In 1850 Bach sent to all the provincial governors a circular in which he proclaimed the German language to be the State language. And following this, a real reign of terror prevailed. Everywhere were govern-

ment spies and the minions of the newly-organized military police. The military courts-martial filled the gaols with political prisoners. It was an unutterably bad time for the Czech leaders. "We share the fate of the first Christians," said Dr. Pinkas to Havlíček, "we are tortured, laughed at, calumniated as they." Yet even then heart and soul and hope did not utterly die. It was at such a time that Palacký, "the Father of the Nation," dared to say: "Czechs we were before Austria, we also shall be after it." In the light of political conditions to-day this was a remarkable prophecy.

Francis Joseph, whe became Emperor in the notable year 1848, at first formally granted constitutional government, but really undisguised absolutism prevailed until 1860.

In the Constitution of 1848 Joseph II's "Patent of Toleration" had been considerably enlarged and freedom of belief and of religious worship had been granted to all Christian creeds, as well as to the Jews. Distinctive church self-government was allowed the free administration of particular institutions and funds, while civil and political rights were to be adjudged quite independent of the religious creed of the individual concerned. Religious bodies other than those of the Roman Catholic Church could also, if they wished, foster their own religious education by building and supporting their own schools, and thus arose various non-Catholic types of schools, Protestant, Jewish, etc.

All this would have have meant a remarkable advance in liberty and education, if granted under a sympathetic central government, but in the immediately succeeding political reactionary period of Bach's

persecuting absolutism, there was a correlating closer federation with Rome. In the rescript of 1850 there was granted a renewal of Episcopal power in the control of education, and a renewal of the Church's judicial power over its own clergy. Priests and even laymen could be sentenced and imprisoned for ecclesiastical offences by ecclesiastical courts under the jurisdiction of the bishops. And the State was bound to help in carrying such into effect. In distinctly civil offences, however, the clergy could be tried by a civil court with the sanction of the bishop.

In the famous, or infamous, Concordat of 1855, made between Francis Joseph and Pius IX, it was decreed that the State should preserve the Roman Catholic religion, "with all its rights and prerogatives according to God's order and the Church's laws." The Church was acknowledged supreme in all matters of marriage and matrimonial offences. Only Roman Catholic teachers could be appointed to gymnasia or middle schools, and bishops were granted full right of censorship of all books.

No such State-conceived conspiracy, however, could now kill the awakened national spirit. Such men as Havlíček, the historians, Palacký and Tomek, with Trojan, Rieger and Šafařík, saw to that. Amidst much tribulation they continually breathed into it the breath of life.

One of the outstanding movements of the time deserves more than passing notice, the rise of the "Sokols" which began as gymnastic societies, and spread throughout Bohemia during the Austro-Prussian war of *1866*. The word "Sokol" is the Czech for falcon, the society's emblem being a falcon's feather worn in the cap. Though ostensibly gymnastic societies, they na-

turally at such a time became important centres of political activity, and became, too, the training ground for disciplined bodies of nationalist volunteers. At the beginning of the war of 1866 they offered their services in the defence of the country, especially in the defence of the passes from Bohemia into Germany, which they considered rightly, as military event immediately proved, key-position in the campaign. But the Vienna Government, in accordance with its idea of making the war a war of "Germans only against Germans," and, deluded by the phantom of a speedy and easy victory, disdained this Sokol offer of service.

By her victory in this brief campaign Prussia gained her object of entirely excluding Habsburg authority from the federated German States. But still within its own dominions the Austrian Government pursued its fatal policy of granting liberty only when compelled by force. The Hungarian rebellion during the war was rewarded with almost complete independence, the Bohemian loyalty with the continuance of oppression. Yet the Government, though it continued in other directions in Bohemia its policy of lynx-eyed repression of political activities, permitted this Sokol movement, with all its pregnant possibilities, to mature and develop under the title of gymnastic associations.

In the more liberal Vienna ministry of 1867—68, under the premiership of Count Beust, all schools were made subject to the civil administration, the right of inter-denominational religious teaching was granted, and teachers of secular subjects were given equality of position, privilege and power with the teachers of religion. The 2nd Article of this new constitution

proclaimed the equality of all citizens in the sight of the law; Article 14 secured for everybody, even for a child, and especially a pupil, full freedom of belief and conscience. After the age of 14 years everyone was free to choose his own religious belief. Civil and political rights were to be independent of individual religious belief. Nobody could be forced to take part in Church festivals, except as subordinate to some competent person such as a father or a guardian. Article 15 laid down the principle of the autonomy of all sanctioned religious societies. Each possessed the right of public Divine Worship, and of administering its own institutions and funds, subject only, of course, to general State laws. Article 16 sanctioned private Divine Service also to members of non-sanctioned creeds in as far as such did not contradict the laws and common morality. Article 17 proclaimed the freedom of science and general instruction and the liberty to found educational institutions on condition that such were efficient as required by the law.

The care of religious teaching in schools was entrusted to competent Churches, the State reserving to itself the right to inspect all teaching.

In the spirit of this new constitution followed the so-called May Laws of 1868. The first introduced the right of civil marriage and registration in cases where the clergyman refused to perform the marriage for some reason not recognized by the State. The third, the so-called inter-denominational law, provided for the transfer of a member of one church to another, and the use of cemeteries for dissenters.

Although these laws were very moderate in comparison with the progressive spirit of the times, Pope

Pius IX condemned them and proclaimed them invalid and non-obligatory on the people.

When, however, in 1870 the Pope suffered himself to be proclaimed infallible, this was even for Austria a little too much *contra rationem*, and, in consequence, the Austrian Government announced to Rome in 1874 the abrogation of the Concordat. A law was passed stating the conditions under which new religious bodies might be sanctioned, on the basis of which law was constituted the Old Catholic Church, which rejected the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope and generally refused to acknowledge the Vatican Council, as well as the new Church of the Bohemian Brethren. The Jesuit orders, too, were abolished throughout the Empire in 1871.

But as Austria never could bear to be definitely estranged from Rome, the Government endeavoured to arrange religious matters according to the wishes of the Vatican and various Ministerial orders were issued contradicting the laws of 1867—1868, so that there was considerable chaos in religious matters and in the connection between Church and State.

These liberal laws were in fact never made effective. The superintendence of the schools fell again into the hands of the pedagogic priests of Rome; freedom of conscience was seldom granted; teachers and university professors were persecuted for their liberalism; attendance of State officials and students at religious services and observance of religious rites were enforced by penalties, all of which were in the spirit of the Imperial rescript of 1854.

II.

Thus we see from this survey of Bohemian history that Hussitism and Roman Catholicism are the two great forces which have moulded the national life and which will continue to influence its future.

We understand, too, how those 160 years of absolute slavery of body and spirit have left their traces in the temperament of the people, impairing their aspirations and fostering a feeling of indifference to religious impulse.

This feeling of an exhausted religious impulse is, no doubt, common to Europe after the War, but it existed in Bohemia long before the War in consequence of its peculiar protracted, depressing servitude to Austria and Rome.

This fact of religious fatigue serves to explain the figures of the first religious census taken after the War in *1921* which are as follows:

	In the whole Republic.	In Bohemia only.
Roman Catholics	10,384.833	5,216.180
The Czechoslovak Church .	525.333	437.377
The Greek and Armenian Orthodox Churches . .	73.097	7.292
Greek and Armenian Catholics	535.543	6.803
Protestants	990.319	246.114
Jews	354.342	79.777
Without denomination . .	724.507	658.084
Various denominations . .	4.943	2.626
The Old Catholic Church	20.255	16.329
	13,613.172	6,670.582

Thus about 76% of the population still described themselves as Roman Catholics, but to appreciate the true significance of these figures a most careful consideration of the existing mentality of the people is necessary.

After the Great War and as soon as Czechoslovakia had become an independent Republic, two strong religious-political forces were set in motion among the people, the Catholic and Anti-Catholic (or Clerical and Anti-Clerical) movements.

The Roman Catholic Church, having lost by the fall of the Habsburgs its long-established, privileged position as the most potent factor in the Government, feared it might further lose all its influence by the realisation of the proposed complete separation of Church and State. So it strove to make its doubtful position safe for the future by delaying any action in this direction and trying in the meantime to win over the tired and indifferent people to its cause. And by vigorous propaganda it was successful in recruiting as political adherents 11%of the voters of the nation from amongst the 76% of the total population officially declared by the census as Roman Catholics.

The Anti-Clericals, on the contrary, wished to destroy at once the preponderating Roman Catholic influence in the country. They were not united, but worked through separate organisations; they were the members of different Protestant Churches and the rationalists, who were not only Anti-Clerical but also anti-religious. They appealed to the nation by recalling the memory of the national history and reminded it of the crimes committed by the Roman Catholic Church against the Czech nation; but though

they succeeded in reducing the Clerical party in the new parliament to a minority of members, in the legislative reforms of the parliament they succeeded only in limiting the influence of the Catholic Church in the schools.

It seems probable that some measure will be passed as a concession to both parties relaxing but not altogether abolishing the association of the State and the Roman Catholic Church.

There is a fear amongst the more moderate parties lest the abolition of organized religion recognized by the State should lead to disastrous conditions of irreligion throughout the country. They feel that the Anti-Clerical parties did not consider carefully enough the danger of plucking from the soul of the nation that which has been fostered there for three hundred years; that they did not sufficiently take into account the facts that the Roman Catholic idea of religion had been the only religious idea allowed to grow up in the minds of the people and that it had been for so long the people's main form of spiritual nourishment.

One has to use the term "State Church" very guardedly. In one sense there has never been a Bohemian Roman Catholic State Church, just as there was really no State Church in England before the overthrow of Papal Roman Catholic domination by Henry VIII. As long as the Pope is the supreme head of the Church it is *ipso facto* not a State-governed Church.

In the sense, however, of the Church exercising functions now usually performed by the State, the Roman Catholic Church in Austria in the Counter-Reformation period subsequent to the battle of the White Mountain was essentially a State Church. It was the Church of the Habsburgs and the State was

its devoted servant. To it was handed over the unfettered control of education, and it was not only the official registration medium of births, marriages, and deaths, but also the source, authority and judicial court for marriage laws and for offences against those laws.

Joseph II decidedly changed the point of view in this question of inter-relation of Church and State. Instead of the Church being the controlling ally of the State he regarded the Church rather as the instrument and agent of the State in carrying out the work of education and in exercising the functions of a moral and religious body of police.

From the point of view of education there is now no one such privileged Church, but all religious organisations may, if they are sufficiently large, claim registration and have equal right of entry into State schools to give religious instruction to those children whose parents desire it for them, provided the number of children in any particular case warrants it; such religious teaching is paid for by the State.

There is a conscience clause whereby parents may claim for their children exemption from all religious teaching.

The work done also by ministers and clergy as registrars of births, marriages and deaths is paid for by the State.

The Congregational body, however, refuses on principle all State support for its work, whether educational or otherwise.

It must be confessed that the whole question of Church and State in Bohemia is being advisedly left in an indeterminate condition, e. g., the appointment of all its own Church dignitaries is claimed by Rome as its sole prerogative, but where such dignitaries have

necessarily an official status it is not easy for the Government to grant this.

The Czechoslovak National Reformed Catholic Church was formed soon after the proclamation of Czech independence by patriotic Catholics who were overwhelmed with the strong feeling that, in the present condition of things and in view of the past national history, they could not with a good conscience remain in union with Rome, but nevertheless could not resign their deep-rooted Catholic traditions of worship.

The Czechoslovak language was introduced into the Church service instead of Latin, and the celibacy of the clergy abolished.

The founders originally intended to remain in doctrine as near as possible to the Roman Church. They also for a time strove to be in union with the Roman Church but without success.

They asked for a revision of the verdict which condemned and burnt Hus at the stake, and proclaimed that they would never submit to the authority of the Roman Church until this crime was acknowledged and condemned; for even Catholics in Bohemia still sympathise with Hus and cherish his memory.

In Moravia and in other parts of the Republic the name of Hus never had such significance. Moravia was nourished by the Roman Church in the Constantine-Methodius tradition, and this still keeps its hold on the people; whereas Slovakia was strongly influenced by the Magyar State idea, and was led rather in this direction with the help of the St. Stephen tradition. We thus understand how it is particularly in Bohemia, as opposed to Moravia and Slovakia, that this Czechoslovak Church has found its chief ad-

herents. The 1921 census shows 525.333 adherents of this Church in the whole Republic, of which number 437.377 are in Bohemia.

Many of the people were evidently in a state of religious confusion at the time of the taking of the census. Some at first declared their religion as Roman Catholic, then altered the statement and wrote that they were Protestants, then again altered the statement and affirmed their adherence to the Czechoslovak Catholic Church.

Undoubtedly since the census was taken a large number of the original adherents of the Czechoslovak Church have not only abandoned Rome, but have, too, practically abandoned the Catholicism of Rome.

The Eastern Orthodox Churches i. e. the Greek and Armenian Churches, numbered in the last census throughout the whole Republic 73.097 adherents, the majority of whom belong to the eastern regions of Slovakia and to Carpathian Ruthenia, in short to the eastern frontier districts. They are for the most part Russians and Rumanians. In Bohemia, Moravia and the main part of Slovakia they are to be found only in certain groups of immigrants from Russia and the Balkans and of Czech people who accepted this creed when the Russophil wave of sympathy swept over the country. In some cases they are people who, being in State service as for instance teachers, are not allowed to be without a religious denomination of some kind, and so adopted at least formally the creed of the Eastern Church. The Greek Catholics in Czechoslovakia numbered in 1921 535,450; the Armenian Catholics, only 93. Members of these Churches are mostly Russians in Carpathian Ruthenia and Slovakia, and Slovaks in Eastern Slovakia. In Bohemia, Moravia and

Silesia, adherents of these Churches are to be found only sporadically.

The various bodies included in the census under the title of "Protestants" are:

1. The German Lutheran Churches in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.

2. The Lutheran Churches in Slovakia, with about 382.428 members.

3. The Calvinist Churches, with 144.549 members in Slovakia and 60.277 members in Carpathian Ruthenia.

4. The Českobratrská Církev Evangelická, the Evangelical Church of Bohemian Brethren; a federation formed on a Presbyterian basis in 1918 of the Reformed Lutherans, with about 233.868 members.

5. The Evangelická Církev Bratrská, or Jednota Bratrská, the Evangelical Church of Brethren or Unitas Fratrum, which settled on Count Zinzendorf's estate in Ochranov (Herrenhut) and which is so well-known through its wonderful missionary activities as the "Moravian Brethren." It claims throughout the Republic 3933 members.

6. The Free Reformed Church (Jednota Českobratrská), the Unity of the Bohemian Brethren, a Congregational body numbering about 5.099 members throughout the Republic.

7. The Chelčický Society, or Baptists, with about 2107 members.

8. The Methodists with 1455 members.

9. Other Protestants. (Churches with ca. 569 members.)

The Free Reformed Church, the Baptists' and the Methodists' Churches are not sanctioned by the State.

In Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia there sur-

vived remnants of the original Church of Bohemian Brethren, chiefly in districts where literature could be brought in secretly from the neighbouring Germanic peoples, as, e. g., in the territory of the Elbe, on the north-east frontier. In districts adjoining Roman Catholic States, as, e. g., Bavaria on the west, these remnants gradually disappeared so that the people lost all consciousness of their early connection with the Bohemian Brethren and said of themselves that they were adherents of the creed of Agnus Dei.

After the issue of the decree of Toleration by Joseph II there was a rebirth of Bohemian Brethren enthusiasm, and people began to recognize and proclaim that, although Protestant Evangelicals, they were neither Lutherans nor Calvinists. They wished to form themselves into a distinctive Church of Bohemian Brethren but the Government placed obstacles in the way and emphasized the fact that the Patent of Toleration sanctioned only two Protestant Churches, the Lutheran and the Calvinistic. These two Churches had a common Ecclesiastical Council in Vienna, and this was the only official form in which Protestantism was tolerated in the Austrian Empire, in the latter part of the 18th century.

Failing therefore to secure any independent status, these Bohemian Brethren either joined foreign Calvinistic and Lutheran Churches or called in to minister to them Calvinistic and Lutheran Slovakian and Magyar pastors; the majority of them acknowledged the Calvinistic belief as this was the nearest to the Bohemian Brethren Creed.

Thus, although the Edict of Toleration served in a sense to save the life of the Church of Bohemian Brethren, it in no way encouraged its development for

its member were forced into communion with a Church alien in history, creed and spiritual life, which had neither understanding of nor sympathy with the independent Czech aspirations.

Endeavours, however, to form a distinctive Bohemian Brethren Church never entirely ceased, and became prominent in the latter part of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. The year 1848 seemed to offer the first opportunity for its accomplishment, and the Brethren, then under the leadership of two of their pastors, Košut and Růžička, claimed to be united into one Church acknowledging the Bohemian Brethren creed of faith. But the failure of the Revolution and the harsh reactionary times that ensued prevented the fulfilment of this purpose. Košut was kept in internment in Carinthia, and the publications of the Brethren were suppressed. It was not till 1917 that, in anticipation of their coming freedom from Austria and Roman Catholic domination, they formulated their plans for the renewal and re-establishment of the Church of Bohemian Brethren throughout the Empire.

Immediately on the conclusion of the Great War, at their general assembly in December 1918, they unanimously adopted the following resolution:— "After 160 years of persecution of the Czech Hussite Churches their remnants were sanctioned by the Edict of Toleration to survive only in the Augsburg and Helvetian Confessions. But the Czech Evangelicals were always vividly conscious of their Czech Reformation origin in the Utraquist Church and in the Unity of the Bohemian Brethren. And now, therefore, when self-government has returned to the Czech nation, both these Churches at this general assembly in Prague on the 17th December, 1918, solemnly and unanimously

resolve that after having been for 300 years separated from the Church of their forefathers, they publicly return to and unite with the Utraquist Church and the Church of Bohemian Brethren of the Hussite Reformation. The origin of both being one, they proclaim themselves a united Church according to the example of this Church of their forefathers and according to the legacy of Comenius expressed in his "Testament".

They proclaim the Gospel as the basis and principle of their religion, they acclaim the Bohemian Confession of this Gospel, upon which in 1575 the Utraquist Church and the Unity of Bohemian Brethren agreed, and on the basis of which in the "Majestát" of 1609 they united into one Church. They also acclaim the creed of Comenius of 1662 as the final declaration of the belief of the Bohemian Brethren.

With the acceptance of these Bohemian creeds they declare their historical and sipiritual union with the above-mentioned Hussite Churches and declare their resolve to live and work for the advancement of God's Kingdom in the Czech nation according to the example of these Churches and on the basis of their principles, teaching, experience and gifts."

In Silesia the position was quite different from that in Bohemia and Moravia, the people there having possessed a somewhat greater religious freedom even during this Counter-Reformation period.

While in Bohemia the importance of the Calvinist Church was increasing, in Slovakia the Augsburg Evangelical or Lutheran Church became the prevailing Protestant Church. It was largely augmented by Czech fugitives from Bohemia and Moravia in the Counter-Reformation period. It has a Slovak majority, though

it also includes several Magyar and German congregations.

This Slovak Lutheran Church has not united with the Evangelical Church of Bohemian Brethren.

The Calvinist Church in Slovakia, on the contrary, has a Magyar majority, and shows a strong Magyar political tendency. Of its 144.000 members about 16.000 only are Slovaks.

"In former Hungary it used to be considered that the division of Protestantism into the two large Churches, Reformed and Lutheran, corresponded with national or racial difference; the Protestant Magyars were Calvinists, the Protestant Slovaks were Lutherans. This division according to nationality was not quite precise. Most people knew that there were a certain number of Magyar and, of course, German Lutherans, but few knew that there were also Calvinists of the Slovak language. The outward uniformity of Calvinism seemed to be complete.

It was only after the Revolution, when the northern part of Hungary as Slovakia became a part of Czechoslovakia, that Slovak Calvinists were discovered.

Of course their condition was far from being satisfactory, not only in the direction of national consciousness and cultural achievements, but also in religious life and moral practice. Religion, to a large extent, had lost its hold upon the souls of the people. This is not a matter for surprise. Their ministers and teachers were either Magyars, or what we call Magyarones, a term signifying men who, though of a non-Magyar origin, identified themselves with the Magyar idea of a unified State with one language. The congregation, although of the Calvinist-Presbyterian type of Church-constitution, had practically no freedom to

select their ministers. The election, if any, was but a mere formality: the bishop had the decision in his hands. No Slovak had any chance to be approved as minister of one of these congregations. There never was a bishop of the Reformed Church in Hungary who knew anything of the Slovak language. Consequently the ministers had little or no direct and personal contact intercourse with the people. Their different nationality, education and tendency put them high above the possibility of entering into real, friendly relationship with the people. They were lords and naturally religion lost its influence. The service, to a large extent unintelligible to the people, became a mere formality and ceremony. It is no wonder that these Slovak Calvinists used Roman-Catholic prayer-books for their private spiritual food because those were the only ones intelligible to them."

It is also not surprising that religion became a mere matter of external worship, while the school education of the children through the medium of a foreign tongue contained no element of elevating moral influence.

"The Church government of the Calvinist Church in Slovakia has not published any single religious book in Slovak. And when the Slovak Calvinists in America have tried to furnish their brethren at home with religious books in Slovak, the ministers of these Slovak churches, being Magyars or Magyarones, have simply refused to distribute them.

This Slovak minority in the Calvinist Church, feeling the hopelessness of its position in the face of the unsympathetic Magyar majority of its own Church, seeks its release either by union with the Evangelical Church of Bohemian Brethren or through its own autonomy within the Calvinist Church with the free

use of its own language in worship and schools.

The leaders of the Slovak Calvinists have ascertained that among 33,721 Calvinists in the Zemplin and Užhorod districts more than 13,000 use the Slovak language. The presbytery, which is being asked for, would have 30 parochial congregations and 60 associated congregations. Moreover, an almost equal number of Slovak Calvinists are dispersed in other districts and to a large extent Magyarised. There are congregations in which nobody speaks a single word of Magyar, but there are none in which the people do not know the Slovak language. But the present Church government does not allow for any difference in Church administration.

The number of twelve to thirteen thousands is not so small as to make an autonomous presbytery impracticable. There is a Slovak Lutheran Church, which in the same territory has a special presbytery for six to seven thousand Lutherans and is the Lutheran Church of Slovakia; the German minority has separate presbyteries of its own."

The "Evangelická Církev Bratrská", the Evangelical Church of Brethren, or the "Jednota Bratrská", Unity of Brethren, is a branch of the Unity of Brethren which was founded on the basis of the old Unity of Bohemian Brethren by Count Zinzendorf at Ochranov (Herrenhut) in 1720, and the first members of which were German exiles from Moravia who adhered to the Unity of Brethren after its dissolution in Bohemia and Moravia. In Bohemia and Moravia this branch was not organized until the year 1874, and then by means of a mission from Ochranov. The Church at Ochranov came under the government of the Lutheran Church, but it preserved as a sacred heritage the former strict-

ness of the Bohemian Brethren regarding conduct, enforcing on its members abstinence from alcoholic drinks and purity of life. Its branch in Czechoslovakia has remained outside the union of the Evangelical Church of Bohemian Brethren. It possesses several German congregations and is increasing in certain Czech towns.

The *"Jednota Českobratrská"*, Unity of Bohemian Brethren, accepted this name after the political upheaval in 1918 in order to manifest what it considered to be the distinctive characteristic of the Bohemian Reformation. Before the War the same Church was called the *Free Reformed Church*, because it did not ask to be sanctioned by State registration, which it also has not sought since. It corresponds in Church government to the Congregational body in England and America. Through the missionary efforts of the American Boards this Congregational body has made considerable progress during the last 50 years.

The Chelčický Society, or Baptists, are carrying on a very earnest and useful missionary work in Slovakia.

Soon after the political revolution in 1918 the Episcopal *Methodists* from America established a missionary organisation in the country, and as they seem to have plenty of money at their command, their influence is increasing very rapidly, so that they are working at present in some thirty places.

Turning our attention now to the present religious outlook in Czechoslovakia, we notice that the Roman Catholics have necessarily carried over from the past great and powerful influences based on their many-sided hierarchical organisation, on a number of prominent personalities and the offices which they hold, on numerous cultural institutions and on their enorm-

ous wealth. They possess large estates of thousands of acres in extent. The Archbishop of Olomouc, Moravia, alone possesses 46,000 hectares. They financially control a number of banks and industrial enterprises.

As elsewhere the custom grew up from very early times of noblemen and landed proprietors founding churches on their estates on condition that such should be used as burying-places for themselves and their families. Funds and property were left "Ad pias causas" for the performance of Masses for the welfare of their souls, and to keep their names in memory after their death. And because at that time it was hardly possible to endow an institution or church except by the bequest of landed properties, portions of estates in all directions became the sources of revenue for church livings. These church funds were administered differently at different times and in different places, generally by the patron or his heirs with the collaboration of Church and State dignitaries and other trustees, though the priest on his appointment obtained to some extent the control of such property. Such a patron-proprietor might eventually, of course, happen to be a non-Catholic, a Protestant, a Jew or a quite irreligious person.

These Church funds increased enormously during the Counter-Reformation period by the sequestration of many properties, and the question of the various rights and duties of patrons, trustees and priests, the respective power of control by State and Church constitute a most intricate problem to-day in Czechoslovakia in regard to any measure of complete separation of Church and State.

With all these advantages of property, prestige, press and Church organisation it can readily be re-

alised that Roman Catholicism still exercises a wide influence over the life of the nation. It must not be forgotten that it was the only Church having the official right of entry into all the schools, which as public institutions, had the religious teachers paid not from the funds of the Roman Catholic Church, but from those of the State. Also every parish had, and still has, its Roman Catholic spiritual administrators supported by the State. Their enormous wealth makes it possible for them to maintain their many-sided press and to publish a number of papers, journals and books for propaganda purposes. Besides their clergy they support a number of agitators, whose activity ranges over political rather than purely religious questions.

They remained at first somewhat on the defensive, but as soon as they found that the Slovak people would support their endeavours, they began to take the offensive and to demand larger powers, such as completely denominational schools. They have even considered themselves strong enough to impugn publicly Hus's sacred memory and to publish in their representative press a leading article coarsely libelling his personality with an insulting reference to the position assigned him in the national history.

The *Reformed National Catholic Church* is the runaway child of the Roman Catholic Church. It carried away from the Papal Mother Church a number of priests who brought with them groups of neighbouring sympathizers. It seems to have been in many cases rather a personal than an ideational reform movement, depending a great deal on the popular submission to the leadership of the parish priest. If the priest went over to the National Catholic Church a number of his parishioners went over with him, but if he remained

in the Roman Church most of his parishioners remained in it also.

"The origin of the Church can easily be traced to a certain mood and tendency prevailing among the younger generation of the Roman Catholic priests. Among the negative causes which created dissatisfaction and resentment among these priests one can mention the Church's unbending uniformity, its autocracy and dogmatism and in no small measure its lack of national spirit. To these may be added the unsocial spirit of the Church, so apparent in the distribution of the Church's wealth. For while the Archbishop of Olomouc and Praha (Prague) had an income of millions of crowns a year, the faithful, hard working chaplains and priests in smaller towns and villages lived on starvation salaries, doled out by the State.

The list would not be complete without mentioning two more contributing causes. One is the tradition of the Bohemian Reformation period written up anew in books of fiction, the other the unprogressive spirit of the Roman Catholic Church expressing itself in antagonism against the currents of modern scientific research.

The beginnings were seemingly quite insignificant. A large organization of the priests at first desired only simple reforms, which it petitioned for at Rome. They were:—The use of the national language in the church service; a voice in the election of the church dignitaries; abolition of celibacy or making it voluntary; and social justice in the financial remuneration of the priest.

Rome summarily refused, as might have been expected, all these demands and threatened with excommunication the priests who insisted upon them. Most

of the reformist priests yielded obediently. A small minority left the Church and a few were excommunicated. It was only at this stage of affairs that the laymen came out, following their priests in large numbers. In some cases whole villages followed the lead of a trusted and heroic leader to form a National Catholic Church free from the influence and domination of Rome. At first it appeared to be only a Czech edition of French Gallicanism. Such Churches already existed among the Poles in America. It was a Church without the Pope, but in every other respect a true Catholic Church. It remained for Czechoslovakia not only to break away from Rome, but also to build on quite a large scale an independent national Church which, in its fundamental faith basis and its outward Presbyterian organisation, can hardly be called a Catholic Church as we commonly know it.

While looking around for sympathetic cooperation and Christian fellowship, the patriotic national feeling naturally led some of the leaders to seek it among the national autonomous groups of the Orthodox Churches using the Slavic language. Had not the Old Catholic Church, which came into existence after the Vaticanum, used for the most part the German language, the new Church would probably have taken this type of Catholic Church as its model, and this would without doubt have been its crystallizing centre. But national considerations led rather to a connection with the East, particularly with Serbia. It is of course not easy to determine where the initiative for this move was the strongest, in the new Czech Church or in Serbia. Had not the Russian Orthodox Church during this time been in a chaotic condition, and had the new Czechoslovak Church had its normal freedom of ex-

pression at home and abroad, it seems quite certain that the latter would have sought an alliance with the former. The Serbian Orthodox Church offered help in the solution of at least one vital problem which concerned the Czechoslovak Church, namely, the ordination of bishops. And because in 1920 the new Church, fresh from the ranks of Roman Catholicism, was not yet ripe to make the Protestant leap across the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, the offer was gladly accepted.

Other motives were easily found in the sacred memories of of SS. Cyril and Methodius, the first apostles of Christianity to come to the Czech people during the ninth century from the Slavic Balkan States. This far-off historical fact with all its legends wide-spread among the people, and the natural sympathy for the Serbian nation, which during the Great War fought so heroically and suffered so immeasurably, collectively formed a basis for a union with the Serbian Orthodox Church. Probably there were not many who actually planned to make of the new Czech Church a real Orthodox Church. For it was clear to the majority of men that the whole evolutional development, both religious and cultural, had been altogether of a different sort here, and consequently must take a different direction. It was simply a question of organic, but voluntary and loosely connected association with the family of the Slav national Churches.

In the negotiations, which were dragged out seemingly indefinitely, there are many things which are not at all clear. But there are a few well-defined facts which stand out clearly and a mention of these must suffice here. One is that the Serbian Orthodox Church ordained only one of the three elected Czechoslovak bishops, the Rev. Gorazd Pavlík of Olomouc, and de-

ferred the ordination of the other two, the Rev. K. Farský of Prague and the Rev. Rudolph Pařík of Kutná Hora, because their election was not unanimous.

Meanwhile from the question of organization there developed quite a serious question of creed. The fundamental creed basis of the Orthodox Church is given by the first seven Oecumenical Councils. Such is quite conceivable in a Church that has grown out of an organic connection with the first stages of Christianity, but for a Church that has had its birth in the twentieth century it is absolutely impossible to ignore the age-long progress and development of Christian thought and return to this same primitive basis. Such a Church can see value in the old symbols of the Oecumenical Councils as documents that show the development of the Church's faith, but they cannot be regarded as a creed for men of to-day.

Because of these differences of outlook in regard to creeds, the Orthodox Church has now severed its formal connection with the Czechoslovak Church and *vice versa*. Bishop Pavlík, surnamed Gorazd, still remains loyal however to his Serbian connection, but finding that there existed a great current of opposition to this, particularly in Bohemia, he has resigned from the office of bishop. It is quite possible that a group of churches in Moravia will remain loyal to him and will organize there an Orthodox Church. The Czech Protestant Church maintains towards the new Church an attitude of sympathy and helpfulness, and follows with brotherly interest every new move and advance which it makes. Undoubtedly this new religious movement upon Czech soil will ultimately enrich and quicken the religious life of the nation. The form is not the important thing. The true Christian spirit will

create and develop its own form."

This national Catholic Church has now been granted official State recognition *and has obtained possession* of a number of Church buildings, while in some parishes it shared for some time with the Roman Catholic Church the use of certain churches, so that these rival claims to church property caused the Government some concern. Now this arrangement has been abolished. The Czechoslovak Church possesses at present a public press of three newspapers.

This idea of a National Catholic Church, anti-Roman and anti-Papal, very strongly appealed at first to a large number of Czech Catholics, but when they were called upon to accept the responsibility, financial and otherwise, of being members of this new Church, with no State guaranteed privileges and with no funds of its own, their enthusiasm somewhat cooled. As Roman Catholics they had not been accustomed to regular personal contributions for the support of their Church.

In comparison, of course, the Evangelical Protestant Churches are in a better condition, for they have at least their historical traditions and their established religious communities, which have outlasted the age of persecution, so that they are ready to make sacrifices. But such is not the case with the Czechoslovak National Reformed Church. It has neither funds, historical traditions nor organized growth.

While, however, in Czechoslovakia this National Catholic Church finds itself in this somewhat unprogressive condition, its influence is rapidly extending in America among the Czechoslovak Americans who possess and fully support their own Bishop and priests.

The Protestant Churches of Czechoslovakia never

really lost their identity, even during the hard times of the Counter-Reformation period. And they have kept their faith so that to-day they are established communities working on firmly-built foundations. Their recent revival, reorganisation and progressive outlook vary according to the people's consciousness of the need of adapting the spirit of the past to the needs of the present. They appear at a disadvantage in comparison with the Roman Catholic Church in respect of wealth and also of unity. They often seem to escape the Scylla of papal dogmatism merely to run foul of the Charybdis of narrow dividing sectarianism, emphasising their theological and ecclesiastical differences rather than their common spirit of religious devotion to Christ. It should be increasingly possible in all Protestant Churches to combine independence of religious thought with the attitude of full religious toleration and charity towards other Christians who show sincerity of belief.

Also it seems desirable to give expression to the outer world of this inward unity that should bind all Christians together. And for the realization of this in Czechoslovakia the larger Protestant Churches, might first agree on some common Free Church Council, and then invite the other Protestant denominations to a mutual conference. The Evangelical Church of Bohemian Brethren has begun to work in this direction and it would be desirable for this exemple to be followed.

To-day perhaps the Evangelical Church of Bohemian Brethren has the best opportunity, and the impulse is certainly not lacking to arouse and deepen an intelligent spiritual fervour of Christian life throughout the Republic. It is undoubtedly the most liberal and theo-

logically progressive of all the Protestant Churches in the State. And in this modern spirit it is supported especially by the Hus Theological Faculty at Prague, a remarkable Theological University, in which there are several Lutheran and Calvinist professors.

"Czechoslovakia is at present the scene of many an interesting religious event. The centre of gravity among the Churches is shifting, a new Church is in the making, and the legion of those persons who have withdrawn from all Churches is rapidly increasing. This constitutes a very fruitful field study for the student of religious psychology, and is an extremely important matter for the nation, the future of which may be changed in its whole content and direction."

According to the census it would seem that the religious future of Czechoslovakia belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. But such a supposition would be quite misleading. The census figures of Roman Catholicism were unduly increased by the so-called "Matricular Catholics". Such are simply hereditary, officially registered Roman Catholics, who grow up however with no distinctive belief or religious sympathy, or who consider their religious opinions a matter of purely private, independent judgment, and practically remain outside all religious organisations. It is difficult to gauge the number of these matricular Catholics, but they probably number throughout the country more than half the total of the Roman Catholics shown in the 1921 census.

We must not forget, too, in these figures the part played by Slovakia on the side of Roman Catholicism. In the past, Slovakia was under the sway and slavery of the Magyar Government, the people not being permitted in church or school even the use of their mother

tongue. But there is bound to be a great awakening in Slovakia as soon as a new generation grows up there. The enlightened soul of the people will not be satisfied with being blindly led by the priests, but will judge the truth for itself, and the judgment then formed will not help the cause of the Romish Church.

Side by side with all this there is of course in Czechoslovakia, as elsewhere, the great danger that in the revolt from the irrational religionism of the past the people may forego altogether the claims of religion. But man is a religious being and only needs to see religion in its right perspective to acknowledge his need. Having passed through the horror, pain, and grief of the Great War, how many have looked in vain to organised religion for comfort, consolation, help and peace, and, asking for bread, have been offered a stone! This is why spiritualism has so widely spread as a religion through Czechoslovakia since the War. It at least seemed to offer a more hopeful, promising and assuring goal in the search for the hidden mysteries of life. In Czechoslovakia spiritualism is a highland plant. It first arose and spread amongst the sensitive, frontier mountain folk, who in their often sad struggle with a hard and pitiless, though beautiful, nature heard voices of the Unseen.

This new spiritualist cult has overflowed from the mountains into the plains, from small villages to the large towns, and is a largely uncontrolled semi-religious force. It numbers among its adherents all sorts and conditions of people, the rich and the poor, the ignorant and the highly-educated, its form being frequently modified by the individual temperament of its disciples. This spiritualistic cult has spread most in purely Roman Catholic districts.

It may be that new times and conditions demand new forms of religious expression. For what is the end, purpose and motive of all these Church organisations? "To save men's souls." Yes, but to save them from what, and for what? It would suffice, no doubt, according to the ordinary ideas of religious people, to be what is termed a good church member, a regular attendant at religious services of the Church, a devout partaker in its Sacraments, a helper or officer of the Church in its various energies, and a contributer to its funds. But the trouble seems to be in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere that large numbers of men and women, even good and intelligent men and women, do not see how all this can save their souls in any decent Christian sense, not even if in addition it carries with it a subjective purity of life and freedom from vice, combined with an emotional good-will towards society. Is not the soul's salvation, they say, simply a happy enthusiasm for social service, actively and effectively militant? And is not this possible to-day in connection with special institutional work rather than in ordinary Church organisation? It does not matter even whether it is distinctly labelled Christian, though it might historically acknowledge its indebtedness to Christian influences and to Christ.

But whatever the particular forms of expression may be, one cannot but think that, though at present caught in the recoil from a degrading, superstitious State-controlled Roman Catholicism, the nation which gave birth to Hus and the Táborites, and which stood so remarkably in the vanguard of spiritual freedom in Europe, will not be found lacking in the growth of true religion amongst its people, but to have before it a great spiritual future.